

## **ABSTRACT**

**RESEARCH PAPER:** Where Guns Go to Kill: An Experiment of Illegal Gun Activity in Indianapolis, Indiana

**STUDENT:** Thomas B. Rector

**DEGREE:** Master of Public Administration

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Using four years of county level data drawn from the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) for Indianapolis, Indiana and a pooled cross-sectional time series research design, I investigate whether illegal gun activity (the number of stolen guns less recovered firearms) has an influence on violent gun-crime rates. I contribute to the literature by associating illegal firearms with stolen weapons, confiscated weapons, and violent gun crimes. Results show a strong positive relationship between illegal gun activity and violent gun crime. Findings also reveal that the number of legal weapons has no relevance on crime rates as data on this matter is inconclusive which results in unsubstantial findings in previous research. The true measure of violent gun crime lies in the number of stolen weapons entering and exiting the illegal market. The strong and consistent effect of the number of illegal gun activity on violent crime has important policy implications because it suggests that gun owner's rights to purchase guns should not be regulated given the number of guns in a community is not related to violent crime, rather efforts to prevent guns from being stolen as well as increase the ability for police to recover illegal guns should be pursued.